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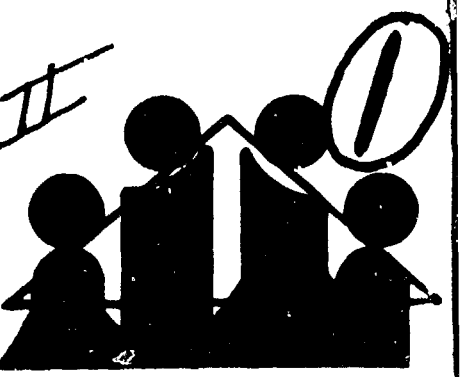

FAMILY RESEARCH CENTER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR

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AS PARENTS GO, SO GO THE CHILDREN

THE ADJUSTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY CHILDREN

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The Development and Adjustment of Children in the Military*

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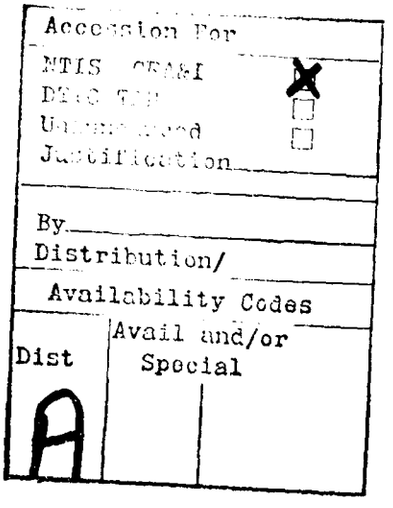

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INTRODUCTION

Interest in the development of military children and the adjustments they must make appears to have begun during World War II, but until recently, attention paid to the topic has been minimal. The earliest articles addressed the impact of the mobilization of fathers for war (Gardner & Spencer, 1944; Igel, 1945) as well as the adjustments the families had to make when the fathers returned (Hill, 1945, 1949). A few articles published in the early 1950s expanded on those same topics (Seplin, 1952; Stolz, 1952, 1954). However, the classic study by Hill (1949) stands out as a comprehensive look at the topic of father absence and family reunion/reintegration and has frequently been cited even in recent research.

Most of the literature has dealt with the topics of father absence, family reunion, children's adjustment to loss, their adjustment to divergent cultures, mixed marriages, child abuse, effects of mobility or relocation, childcare, and the impact of the prisoner of war experiences on parental relationships with children.

The Unique Environment of the Military Child

A brief overview of the environmental context in which military children develop is necessary to understand the adjustments they are called upon to make. Military children often grow up in a community that is oftentimes separate from the civilian community. If the family lives on a military post, much of the educational, social, and recreational activities are offered on that base. Even though the shortage of on-base housing has forced a greater proportion of military families to reside within the civilian community in recent years, all military children are inculcated with military values to some extent (Giffen & McNeil, 1967).

Identification with the military lifestyle and the rank structure within it provides a special status for the military child. Nonetheless many aspects of the military lifestyle can impact detrimentally on the family and children. Various articles attest to the

deleterious effects on children because of the frequent absence of the father (Baker, et al., 1968; David, 1979; Dickerson & Arthur, 1965; Lyon & Oldaker, 1967; Seplin, 1952; Trunnell, 1968). Relocation (Dickerson & Arthur, 1965; Kurlander, et al., 1961) and retirement (Giffen & McNeil, 1967; Mosher, 1979) have also been pointed to as variables influencing child adjustment and development.

Although it has been suggested that the prevalence of psychiatric disorders may be much higher for military children than those actually documented (Cantwell, 1974), one study (Kenny, 1967) found a relatively lower incidence of maladjustment in military children when compared to their civilian counterparts. Families in which the mothers exhibit maladjustment appear more vulnerable to the stresses inherent in the military lifestyle (Cantwell, 1974; Gabower,1960).

Although very young children of either sex appear unaffected by the military lifestyle (Farley, 1979), among older children, males tend to be more influenced by the status structure than females (Giffen & McNeil, 1967; McIntire & Drummond, 1979). However, both sexes may see themselves as being separate from the civilian community and their civilian peers (McIntire & Drummond, 1978; Mosher, 1979).

The military structure and lifestyle profoundly shape the roles found within the family (McIntire & Drummond, 1978). Contrary to the more traditional civilian family where the father is typically the disciplinarian and the breadwinner, while mother is "just a housewife," research in past years has shown that military children tend to view the mother as the disciplinarian and also as a very successful and important component of the family. Military children have also been found to be more family-oriented than their civilian counterparts.

Father Absence and Its Impact

Although some writers report that military-imposed father absence can have a positive influence on child development (Baker, et al., 1967; Igel, 1945; Lester, 1976; Mosher, 1979; Nice, 1978; Pierce,

1978; Rosenfeld, et al., 1973; Shaw, et al., 1978), most of the reports in the literature dealing with father absence emphasize the detrimental effects that it may create.

A number of writers have pointed out that it is a normal reaction for children to show emotional reactions such as anxiety, anger, sadness, resentment, and fear in response to a potentially traumatic event such as father absence (Hillenbrand, 1976; Lester, 1976; ierce, 1978; Rosenfeld, et al., 1973). When father absence occurs where there is underlying psychopathology or family problems, the result for children can be self-limiting and counterproductive behavior such as aggression, introversion, internalization of affect, helplessness, defensiveness, and impulsivity, which create strained relationships with parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and other adults (Baker, et al., 1968; Dickerson & Arthur, 1965; Gabower, 1960; Gonzalez, 1970; Hill, 1945; Hillenbrand, 1976; Kurlander, et al., 1973; Spjut & Studer, 1975; Stolz, 1952, 1954).

Research has shown that family health problems may develop (Baker, et al., 1968; Gabower, 1960), and that children from mixed cultural marriages may be even more vulnerable to the potentially debilitating effects of father absence (Cottrell, 1978). Also, father absence which occurs during the critical years from birth to seven years may have a particularly serious, deleterious effect on later development (Gabower, 1960; Pierce, 1978; Seplin, 1952), and prolonged repeated periods of father absence have a cumulative effect on the developing child (Pederson, 1966). Others (Biller, 1977), however, point out that it is the quality of father-child interaction while together, and not the factor of amount of father absence, which is critical to children's adjustment.

Birth order and gender have also been singled out as factors related to the effects of father absence on the military child. Some investigators report that the oldest child is most affected by the separation (Hill, 1945; Peck & Schroeder, 1976; Spjut & Studer, 1975). Another study devoted exclusively to the relationship between birth order and father absence suggested that each child in a family

is affected differentially (Hillenbrand, 1976). Other investigators report that first born boys who experience father absence in early childhood score lower on intelligence tests, and those who experience later father absence view themselves as being more similar to their mothers than to the fathers (Carlsmith, 1964; 1973). Still other findings indicated that boys who have older sisters are more aggressive, more dependent, less socially mature, more impulsive, exhibit poorer motor control, and are poorer achievers. Girls with older sisters, on the other hand, were shown as more aggressive and higher achievers, while younger siblings more agressive, more dependent, and more verbal when the father is absent at an earlier age.

Child adjustment within the school situation as well as scholastic achievement are other areas that appear to be affected by father absence. A number of investigators have reported that father absent military children tend to do poorly in school (Baker, et al., 1968; Gabower, 1968; Rosenfeld, et al., 1973). One study which examined the impact of early father absence on college freshmen who came from military families, suggests that the effects, if any, are not longterm (Carlsmith, 1973). Hillenbrand (1976) found that boys with older sisters were poorer achievers in school, and girls with older sisters demonstrated higher achievement. Apparently, the stress of father absence can negatively impinge on some children with the immediate effects not necessarily being longterm, and sex of child mediating the effects.

Father absence, then, appears to affect boys and girls differently. Typically, at least in civilian families, boys identify with their fathers and incorporate many of the interests and values associated with the masculine role (Pierce, 1978). Research suggests that father absent military children may grow up being more verbally oriented, a style usually associated with the feminine style of communication (Carlsmith, 1964, 1973; Hillenbrand, 1976). Associated with this phenomenon, it has been suggested that boys may feel less secure about their future roles as men than their civilian counterparts (Carlsmith, 1973).

Many of the articles which examined the effects of father absence on the military child pointed out the very important role a

mother plays in influencing the child's reaction to military family separation (Fagen, et al., 1967; Gonzalez, 1970; Igel, 1945; Keller, 1973; Marsella, et al., 1974; Mosher, 1979; Nice, 1978; Peck & Schroeder, 1976; Pedersen, 1966; Stolz, 1952). Her reaction to the departure of the husband appears to play a major role in effective coping with father absence among the other family members. Even though very young children are typically less affected by father absence than the older child, the anxiety of the mother can still be communicated even to the infant (Stolz, 1952).

In disturbed families, research suggests that the mother can become so immobilized by the anger and fear precipitated by the departure of the husband that she may actually withdraw from the role of parent. The oldest child may then be forced to assume the vacated role. This situation can result in a loss of parental limits which then creates a vicious cycle where the mother becomes increasingly ineffective in handling the misbehavior of the children (Keller, 1973; Peck & Schroeder, 1976).

The departure of the father can also foster an excessively dependent relationship between mother and the male children, which, according to several writers, can hinder normal identification with the father and prevent adequate psychosexual development (Carlsmith, 1973; Hillenbrand, 1976; Pierce, 1978; Stolz, 1950). The introduction of father absence into already high-risk families can precipitate a major crisis within the family and expose the child to the full impact of mother disturbance (Pedersen, 1966).

Certainly the methods of child discipline utilized by the mother can influence child adjustment to father absence. Harsh physical punishment can be counterproductive in disciplining children's misbehavior (Gabower, 1960; Hill, 1979). One the other hand, discipline utilizing reasoning, talking, isolation, and withholding privileges has been found to facilitate successful child adjustment (Hill, 1949).

Several ways have been suggested to foster successful child adjustment to father absence. First of all, the children and the wife can be prepared for the separation by the father himself through his acknowledgement of the children's feelings about the separation.

The mother should maintain the same family rules that existed when the father was present. Moreover, the father should write separate letters, when possible, to each child during his absence (Lester, 1976). Steps such as these will assure the family and children that the father is thinking about them while he is gone and that he understands their feelings about his leaving. The maintenance of the family rules during father's absence provides continuity and a sense of security and helps to facilitate family reunion/reintegration subsequent to the disruption.

The Vietnam prisoner of war (POW) experience provided an opportunity for researchers to study the effects of prolonged stressful father absence upon children (Segal, 1974). Here again, as in routine military absence, the mother played a major role in determining the adjustment of the children. Findings from the longitudinal family studies of the Center for Prisoner of War Studies in San Diego indicated that the impact of father absence on children seemed to rely on three major factors: (1) the mother's attitude toward the separation; (2) her satisfaction with the marriage prior to the separation; and (3) her ability to cope adequately with the separation period. More specifically, the mother's ability to cope with the stresses of separation, manage household affairs, her involvement in social activities, and her sense of independence were good indicators of successful adjustment for her children (Hunter, 1977; 1978a; 1978b; 1978c; 1980; Hunter & Plag, 1973; 1977; McCubbin & Dahl, 1976a; 1976b; McCubbin, et al., 1976c; McCubbin, Hunter & Metres, 1974; Plag, 1976.

The quality of mother-child communications also had an influence on child adjustment in families of servicemen missing in action (MIA) during the Vietnam conflict (Robertson, 1976).The concept of psychological father presence, which has been defined as the maintenance of the husband/father role during separation in the MIA family, is a phenomenon which has been shown to be related to family dysfunction (Boss, 1975; 1977; 1980; Boss, Hunter & Lester, 1977). The variable was found to be correlated with high degrees of control within the family, family organization, and rigidity within

the family environment, which suggests dysfunctional family systems. On the other hand, the MIA mother's resolution of the husband's absence through acceptance of the loss was found to lead to a more flexible management of the household, an active pursuit of educational goals, close relationships, personal growth, and remarriage, all of which appeared to promote better children's adjustment. The resolution of the grieving process and the courage to start anew appeared to be beneficial for the entire family.

Based on the results of another report on POW/MIA families, children who had experienced prolonged father absence tended to exhibit poorer personal and social adjustment than those who had not (Dahl & McCubbin, 1975). Mothers reported various nervous symptoms and behavior problems in their children, as well as poor relations with mothers, peers, and other adults, compared with norms for the instrument used (McCubbin & Dahl, 1976c). Gender differences with regard to adjustment were not present, although age differences were. Younger children under the age of five and older children tended to adjust better than those in the midrange ages. Father absent adolescents appeared more alienated than the general norms for the measure used; however the validity of these findings has been questioned by later investigators (Nice, 1980).

A study of the children of Canadian POWs during World War II showed that the oldest female child was most affected, exhibiting symptoms such as depression, withdrawal, dependency and passivity, which paralleled those of the mother (Sigal, 1974). Child adjustment and family cohesiveness were reported to improve as the period of father absence continued during the Vietnam experience (Dahl, 1976; Dahl & McCubbin, 1975). A comparative study showed that children of MIAs appeared to be more vulnerable to the stresses of father absence than children of POWs (McCubbin, Dahl, Farish & Lester, 1976c). More ambiguity and uncertainty in regard to the father's status made it difficult for the children to resolve the issue. Children reported adjustment problems in the areas of social and family responsibility, conflictive peer relations, and personal frustration in coping with prolonged absence. Ambivalence over the

prospect of the father's demise, the necessity of starting over without him, and the possibility of the mother's dating other men, created much apprehension in the children. On the other hand, MIA children reported advanced maturity and greater sensitivity to other people (McCubbin, et al., 1974). Obviously, the children had been deeply affected by this tragic situation, both positively and negatively.

The Reunion/Reintegration Period

Separation is difficult for family members, but the return of the father back into the family system is also stressful and requires additional adjustments which the entire family must make. Unfortunately, there is little research pertaining to the military family's adjustment to the reunion phase, but what does exist shows that the reunion period may be even more stressful than the separation period. The topic of family reunion/reintegration and its effects on children has been examined somewhat more focally as part of the Vietnam POW resesarch. The literature suggests that child adjustment problems are common, but normal (Baker, et al., 1968; Keller, 1973; Lester, 1976; Marsella, et al., 1974; Rosenfeld, et al., 1973). Generally, substantial shifts in family roles that have taken place during father absence must occur again, reflecting a reiteration of the changes in family leadership roles after the father's return (Gonzalez, 1970; Rosenfeld, et al., 1973). These "flip-flop" family roles require flexibility if family adjustment is to proceed.

Family tensions frequently result when the father returns. For instance, he may expect that all the rules and family routines have stayed the same, when in fact that is not the case. Parental differences in terms of child discipline often become a critical issue. The father may then impose overly rigid expectations, enforced with strict discipline (Lester, 1976) or, quite the opposite, may establish excessively permissive standards to try to win the children's affections (Stolz, 1954). The situation becomes problematic when it is contrary to the mother's expectations. Family tensions

can also arise when the mother and children compete with each other for the father/husband's attention (Lester, 1976; Marsella, et al., 1974).

There are several ways to facilitate the reintegration of the father into the family unit. The children can be prepared for the father's return with the groundwork being laid during the father-absent period. Letters and photographs sent to father which chronicle the changes that have taken place at home and with the children have been found to make for successful adaptation (Hill, 1945). Upon father's return, it has been suggested that the first week be reserved for family activities to avoid or minimize interference from outside, competing interests for the father's attention; i.e., work, relatives, and friends (Lester, 1976).

Prisoner of war research offers a more global view of child adjustment to the return of the father after an extended period of time. Overall, child adjustment had improved two years after the father's return (Dahl, McCubbin, Farish & Lester, 1976; Metres, 1975). As found for ordinary military father absence, in the POW situation the mother's reactions to his leaving and returning were found to be major contributing factors in child adjustment. Also, where mothers viewed the relationship with their POW husbands more positively, exhibited less tension during the separation, and reported better relationships with their own parents, their children were more likely to be better adjusted subsequent to father's return.

Moreover, POW mothers who perceived the family environment as independent and encouraged assertiveness within the family had children who demonstrated better adjustment two years after the father's return. After reunion, the father, as well as the mother, played crucial roles in children's personal adjustment (Dahl, McCubbin, Farish & Lester, 1976c).

Comparisons of the adjustment of children from families who were eventually reunited (POWs) with non-reunited (MIAs) and reconstituted families (remarried MIA wives) showed no significant differences between children of reunited and non-reunited families in overall social and personal adjustment. However, reunited children exhibited fewer nervous symptoms and better community relations.

Also, children in reunited families exhibited better overall adjustment than those in reconstituted families, while no significant differences were found between reconstituted families and non-reunited families for personal and social adjustment. Moreover, the reunited group evidenced better adjustment in the areas of school and community relations, and a general freedom from withdrawal tendencies when compared with the reconstituted group (Dahl, 1976; 1977; Dahl, etal., 1975; 1976). Apparently, the addition of a new father did not necessarily offset the negative effects of extended father absence immediately.

However, as mentioned earlier, there appears to be a controversy in the POW literature as to whether protracted father absence significantly affects longterm child adjustment. One study, mentioned previously, reported that the children of returned POWs exhibited poorer personal and social adjustment than the norms one to two years after the father's return (Dahl & McCubbin, 1975). It was also reported that the harsher the treatment received in captivity as perceived by the father, the more difficult it was for him to establish a close and satisfying relationship with his children after his return (McCubbin, et al., 1977), suggesting evidence for the origin of second generational effects of captivity. A more recent study (Nice, 1978) attempted to replicate Dahl and McCubbin's findings, but found that although the children from POW families were below the norms in personal and social adjustment, no significant differences were found between the scores for POW children and those of a matched group of children of military fathers who had not been POWs. Thus, the validity of the particular instrument used in both studies, as well as the conclusion about the longterm effects of captivity on children were brought into question.

Children's Adjustment to Loss

With the exception of the Vietnam MIA and POW studies (Hunter, 1980; Stratton, 1978), most of the military family literature focusing on children's adjustment to the permanent loss of the father derives from the studies of Israel families who experienced the Yom Kippur war (Kedem, Gelman & Blum, 1975; Lifshitz, 1975a; 1975b;

Smilanski, 1975; Weider & Nashim, 1975). Two major variables were reported as affecting child adjustment to loss: (1) the mother's reaction to the loss of her husband, and (2) the extent of the support systems available to the child. In other words, the child's reaction paralleled that of the mother. When mothers coped with the loss through denial, depression, repression, rage and/or emotional apathy, the child was likely to feel emotionally abandoned by her. Then the child typically attempted to regain the mother's attention through regressive, entertaining, or protective behaviors. It was found that although the child had a need to discuss the father's death, the mother often was intolerant of such talk (Weider & Nashim, 1975).

The mother's emotional indifference appeared to affect the child's perceptual processes (Lifshitz, 1975b). Those children who lived in more stable environments, characterized by a more concentrated and extensive extended family and support system, exhibited less disorganized behavior. Also, the perception that the male child had of his role within the family after the death of his father and the extent of the social system within which he lived were found to play a major role in his adjustment (Lifshitz, 1975a).

The situation of children in American MIA families offers another view of children's adjustment to loss. In this instance, the grieving process extended for an indefinite time because of the uncertainty of the father's status. For some, it still exists today (Hunter, 1980).

Research shows that MIA children manifested difficulties in various areas, including social, as well as family responsibilities, conflict with peers at school, and multiple frustrations related to coping with prolonged father absence, beyond that of their POW counterparts. The children experienced ambivalence over the possibility of the father's being dead and having to start a new life without him and the probability of the mother's forming other intimate relationships with men (McCubbin, et al., 1974). As in the case where the period of father absence was for a finite time, the mother's emotional reaction to the loss, as well as her ability to maintain the family system as an integrated unit, substantially

influenced child adjustment (Boss, 1977; McCubbin & Dahl, 1976a; McCubbin, et al., 1976a,b,c).

Children of Foreign Marriages

In a recent report by Nice (1981), 40 out of 100 of the military wives in his study were from ethnic minorities. Foreign marriages, where each parent comes from a different cultural background, could be expected to require children to adjust to differing culturally defined expectations of the parents and to the prejudices of adults from the prevailing culture in the community where the children reside. Research shows that foreign marriages within the military seem to enjoy a more accepted status than those within the civilian sector. This tendency occurs because of the heterogeneity of backgrounds of military families and the family members' shared identity as military personnel and military dependents. Consequently,military children from nationally and racially mixed marriages might be expected to show relatively superior adjustment in the areas of identity and social integration when compared to those in the civilian community, and they do (Cottrell, 1978).

The problems presented by military children of foreign marriages tend to be similar to those of their civilian counterparts when they occur, and identity problems do occur, particularly during adolescence. The strictness of the foreign-born mother tends to alienate adolescents (Druss, 1965). Moreover, it has been found that the child may experience even greater social marginality when the family is stationed in the country of the foreign-born parent than when residing within the United States. Also, father absence may be more stressful for these children than for other military children (Cottrell, 1978).

Relocation and Geographic Mobility

Frequent relocations are common occurrences within the military and could be expected to affect children's adjustment during their formative years. Those studies cited in the literature indicate that the impact of frequent relocations on military children is largely determined by the age at which the move occurs, and

again, by the mother's reaction to and acceptance of them. Generally, preschool children do not appear particularly vulnerable to relocation; vulnerability increases when children begin to form close peer relations which become severed as a result of the move (Shaw, et al., 1978). However, the mother's distress caused by an impending or actual move can be transmitted even to an infant or toddler (Pedersen & Sullivan, 1964).

No articles on the effect of relocation on elementary school age children could be found. The majority of the research in the area of relocation is on its impact on adolescents. Although a few reports contend that relocation does not contribute to personal adjustment and behavioral problems in adolescents (Baggett, 1979; Gabower, 1960; Pepin, 1966), others have reported that adolescents are quite vulnerable to relocation (Darnauer, 1976; Mosher, 1979; Shaw, et al., 1978). Relocation has been reported not only as a precipitating factor in child maladjustment (Chaskel, 1964; Pedersen & Sullivan, 1964; Kurlander, 1961), but also as a hinderance of educational goals and scholastic achievement (Darnauer, 1976); Pepin, 1966) which impede the capacity for intimacy, and interfere with the formation of occupational goals (Darnauer, 1976). Moreover, frequent relocation can often interfere with treating those children who do have problems (White, 1976).

On a more positive note, relocation has also been reported to broaden the life experiences, values, and the acceptance of other people, in adolescents (Darnauer, 1976), and as being instrumental in promoting the learning of second languages by military teenagers (Rainey, 1978).

It was reported in one study that mothers with well-adjusted children expressed a greater acceptance of mobility as an aspect of military life than those with disturbed children. Moveover, both mothers and fathers of normal children appeared to have identified more with the military lifestyle than those with disturbed children (Pederson & Sullivan, 1964). Apparently, those families that have incorporated the military lifestyle and have accepted the hardships that go along with it are less vulnerable to the stresses precipitated by geographic mobility. This finding seems clearly reflected

in the greater acceptance of mobility which is typically seen in military children (Lyon & Oldaker, 1967).

Children's Adjustment to Divergent Cultures

Children who accompany service personnel to foreign assignments are required to adjust to the prevailing culture found in the host country. As is the case with the parents, the children must adjust to the language differences, differing cultural expectations and standards, and differences in units of measurement and monetary values. The resulting cultural and social isolation may lead to emotional problems in both the parents and the children (Bower, 1967). Adolescents, in particular, can have difficulty adjusting to life within a foreign culture. The isolation they experience can exacerbate the normal stresses and identity problems that ordinarily occur in this age group (Nice & Beck, 1978).

Education is also a major problem for military children in foreign lands. In most areas the children attend dependent's schools staffed by American teachers. However, the facilities, equipment, and textbooks are often outdated and of poor quality. The curriculum often lacks relevancy and does not always meet the needs of the children. High school students may not be exposed to the classes required for college entrance. Moreover, when learning disabilities and behavior problems exist, there are few trained personnel available to handle them. There is little doubt that the educational problems facing military children are intensified in more isolated areas where the children must attend local schools (Nice & Beck, 1978).

The military community and schools in foreign countries provide an important enculturation and socialization function for military children, since they allow children an exposure to their own American culture while in a foreign country, which is believed to be important if they are to eventually spend most of their adult lives in the United States (Little, 1971). However, the military could better meet the needs of military families in overseas assignments if they would upgrade the quality of education facilities provided.

Pre-screening and weeding out of military families where the children have severe learning disabilities and emotional problems would be appropriate to lessen the strain on overseas school personnel (Nice & Beck, 1978). Also, programs to increase contacts of military families with the indigenous people would also be helpful in facilitating more successful adjustment of children of military personnel stationed in foreign countries. Increased understanding and cooperation between military family members and the local peoples would make their mutual experience much more rewarding (Rainey, 1978).

Child Abuse in the Military

Only recently have child abuse and neglect been recognized as serious problems within the military community. Certainly non-accidental injury and the withholding of necessary nurturance and physical care can be serious impediments to healthy child development and adjustment. In the last decade, a number of studies which examined child abuse and neglect in the military community were reported. Unfortunately, the studies have, for the most part, used small samples and offered only a limited view of what appears to be a multi-faceted problem.

Research on the problem of abuse in military families has attempted to, but has been unsuccessful in providing the comparative incidence for military populations compared with civilian communities (Carmondy, et al., 1979; Helfer, 1974; Lanier, 1978; Sattin & Miller, 1971; Wallace & Dycus, 1978). However, a number of studies have identified characteristics that appear to be specific to abusing military families. They show that, generally, military parents who abuse tend to be younger than abusing families in the civilian population (Carmondy, et al., 1979); they appear to be socially isolated within the civilian community; and they are likely to be separated from their extended families (Lanier, 1978; Wallace & Dycus, 1978).

Transiency due to frequent relocations, as well as frequent family separations appear to be contributing factors in the potential for child abuse (Carmondy, et al., 1979; Schnall, 1978). More-

over, a disproportionate number of these military families are in the lower rank structures which provide lower salaries and where jobs require little specialized training or career progression opportunities (Carmondy, et al., 1979; Lanier, 1978; Sattin & Miller, 1971). All these factors can increase dissatisfaction with military life and add stresses to the family environment which increase the potential for child abuse. Knowledge about these factors may help to identify high-risk families and be preventative. Marital discord, surprisingly, may or may not be present (Butler, 1978; Wallace & Dycus, 1978).

The military's response to the problem of child abuse and neglect occurring within its ranks has lagged behind the civilian sector's response. As late as 1970, no family welfare programs or juvenile/family courts were made available in the military to promote family adjustment or to handle family matters requiring legal intervention (Allen, 1970). The military's lack of awareness of the extent of the problem was fostered by a dispersion of incidences among geographically isolated bases, the lack of inter-service/base communication, and its insidious impact, since child abuse did not pose an obvious threat to the military organization's mission (Allen, 1970).

Child protective provisions and services have since been established in each of the services to meet the surfacing needs of children and families (Allen, 1975; Comptroller General, 1979; Doucette, 1980). These provisions, unfortunately, have been victims of neglect at the hands of the Defense Department (Comptroller General, 1979) and reflect a limited understanding of child abuse and neglect and family law (Helfer, 1974). Nonetheless, these efforts are at least a beginning by the military to assume some responsibility in managing the child abuse problems occurring within its ranks.

Families living on military bases are under the exclusive jurisdiction of the military authorities, and questions over who has legal jurisdiction over crimes committed on federal and civilian property can impede efforts to manage incidences of child abuse and neglect (Allen, 1975; Helfer, 1974). The jurisdictional question is answered most effectively by base commanders who are aware of

the problem and willing to work cooperatively with civilian authorities to assist the child and family by removing the child from the abusive environment when appropriate, and by providing supportive services to the family (Allen, 1975).

Treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect in military families is promoted most effectively when it is managed by a multidisciplinary team of military and civilian professionals (Lanier, 1978; Schnall, 1978). Programs involving public relations, hospital intervention, emergency day care, outreach, psychotherapy, support services, and on-base education appear to be important elements of an effective response to child abuse and neglect (Allen, 1975; Carmondy, et al., 1979; Kliot, 1977; Lanier, 1978; Schnall, 1978; Wallace & Dycus, 1978). Parent education may also be helpful (Carmondy, et al., 1979; Gordon, 1978).

Childcare in the Military

Recent increases in the number of single-parented and dual career families, as well as in two-parented families where the wife must work to supplement the service member's income have promoted the increased need for the use of childcare services provided by the military (Brende, 1977; Carr, Orthner & Brown, 1980; Department of the Air Force, 1978; Orthner, 1980; Orthner & Brown, 1978; Suter, 1979; Wheatland, 1978). In fact, the regulations set forth by the three services outlining the specific responsibilities of the service member in providing childcare and the consequences for failure to comply, suggest that the provision of childcare for military families may be essential today for mission readiness (Department of the Air Force, 1978; Department of the Air Force, 1979; Nida, 1980).

The quality of military childcare has been relatively poor in comparison to civilian childcare. The lack of funding and military command's lack of recognition and guidance have left the state of military childcare without direction or the money to improve itself (Brende, 1977; Nesenholtz, 1976; Nida, 1980). Non-appropriated funding status, necessitating that the centers be self-sustaining, make

it impossible to attract and retain quality childcare personnel or improve the quality of the facilities and equipment. Also, exemption from federal and state licensing standards because of on-base locations allow childcare facilities to provide little more than custodial care. The transciency of the children served by the centers also impedes the development and provision of a quality program with continuity necessary for success (Nesenholtz, 1976).

Recognizing the importance of quality childcare to military families in need of such services, as well as its contribution to mission readiness and accomplishment, all three services have initiated strong steps to assess the need for quality childcare and toward assuring its provision (Brende, 1977; Department of the Air Force, 1979b; Nida, 1980; Orthner, 1980). Increased awareness has been prompted by the action of a grass roots task force composed of military parents, military professionals in the area of child development, and directors and staff of military childcare centers. It has assumed an advocacy role lobbying for the improvement of military childcare facilities, and has been instrumental in the military's efforts to improve the quality of the curriculum, construction of new facilities, purchase of stimulating equipment, as well as the training of directors and staff of the centers, including increasing their salaries. Existing programs that apply for federal licensing have been able to supplement their services by becoming eligible for federal tuition subsidies for low income military families and for federal subsidies which provide hot meals to the children (Nida, 1980). Indeed, the quality of military childcare provisions has been steadily increasing in recent years.

Efforts within the Air Force to improve the mission readiness through the provision of childcare for those personnel who require it are currently being initiated. On a trial basis, the Air Force is providing 24-hour childcare availability to base commanders when an alert is called. Longterm care in times of emergency may be provided by volunteer Air Force families and supplemental, qualified baby sitters (Department of the Air Force, 1978).

Military childcare offers a viable and valuable resource to the military command and the families under it. It should be able

to become part of a system of support services available to the military family that may help to lessen the stressors inherent within the military system.

Research Needed on Military Children

What are further resesarch needs? This survey of the literature on the development and adjustment of children within military families suggests the need for further research and for the clarification of the various issues that have been raised. Definitely there is a need for more normative data based on comparative studies of successful and unsuccessful families, as well as the parental characteristics and parent/child interaction patterns in the areas of father absence, adjustment to reunion, geographic mobility, foreign assignments, retirement, and foreign marriages. These data would provide information to families and service providers about the normal adjustments that might be expected during these critical situations and also play a role in minimizing family disruption, while maximizing service provisions.

The POW/MIA experience of some military families has provided an excellent view of the effects of longterm father absence, the problems involved in family reunion following prolonged separation, and the adjustment to loss in military children. Subsequent studies which examine the longterm effects of father absence would be useful in the event that prolonged armed conflict occurs again. This information might also prove useful in predicting the adjustment of children of fathers who are taken as hostages in other countries.

An examination of children's adjustment to a foreign assignment has identified many problematic areas. In addition to comparative studies of successful and unsuccessful adjusting families and children, there is need to examine family expectations and which physical and emotional environments promote child maladjustment or child health. Still another unanswered question is, to what extent does the family's knowledge of a host country's culture and its contact with the indigenous people assist in the successful adjustment to an overseas assignment? Finally, a more in-depth look at the quality of education and educational services provided to

military children is needed.

The problem of child abuse and neglect in the military organization and the issues that have been raised in the literature so far suggest several questions for future study. Do the studies cited give us a true picture of the incidence? Are the family profiles accurate, and do they suggest ways in which to offer preventative, supportive, and treatment services to military families in need? How efficacious have the programs already implemented by the military been in addressing the problem? Have the federal/state jurisdictional issues been resolved adequately to facilitate the provision of coordinated military and civilian child protective services to military families living on military installations? Moreover, what has been the extent of commanding officers' knowledge about child abuse and their willingness to provide service persons under them with time off to resolve this type of family problem, which is frequently court ordered?

The provision of military childcare services also suggests several research q stions. Will the improvement of services increase its overall usage within all service ranks? Are the improved services serving as an effective supportive measure for military families using them and in what ways? Moreover, are the new childcare responsibility regulations accomplishing what was hoped for?

Ongoing research to assess the changing needs of the military family will be necessary to improve and maintain the quality of military family life over time. This improvement will be crucial for the future development and adjustment of military children. Their needs are inseparably intertwined with those of the parents, and the changes that confront them will inevitably confront the children. As the literature has indicated, as parents go, so go the children. The efforts of the military to enhance family adjustment will inevitably pay off in terms of child adjustment.

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This report is the first in a series of reports which review the status of military family literature, and are based upon The Literature on Military Families, 1980: An Annotated Bibliography, USAFA-TR-80-11, DTIC#AD-A093-811, edited by E. J. Hunter, D. den Dulk, & J. W. Williams, 1980.

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

A review of military family research accomplished prior to 1980 indicates that almost one-half the total literature on military child adjustment and development deals with topics on father absence, family reunion/reintegration, adjustment to loss, adjustment to divergent cultures, mixed marriages, child abuse, relocation, childcare, and the impact of the prisoner of war experience on parental relations with children. The military lifestyle presents both opportunities for growth as well as family crises which engender problems

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for a developing child. Perhaps the two major findings emanating from most of these studies are that: (1) the mother fills a more critical family role within the military family than she does in civilian life, and (2) the children's adjustment is a direct reflection of how successfully the mother copes with the unique stresses posed by the military lifestyle.